

January 31, 2001

Honorable Herbert P. Wilkins, Co-Chair
Professor Stuart Altman, Co-Chair
Massachusetts Health Care Task Force
One Ashburton Place-Room 1109
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Judge Wilkins and Professor Altman:

At the Task Force meeting on January 29, 2001, the issue of workforce development was a topic of discussion among several members. It was, at that time, announced that this would be discussed further at a future meeting.

I would like to share with the Task Force, a legislative package on health care staffing-the "Clara Barton Nursing Excellence Program"-that I introduced for consideration in the current session of the Legislature. Several of the proposals, such as a new hire bonus for outstanding graduates and a stipend for experienced nurses for mentoring new nurses, are modeled on our successful teacher education programs. These bills were reviewed by the deans of the schools of nursing, the Massachusetts Nurses Association, the Massachusetts Organization of Nurse Executives, the Massachusetts Hospital Association, among others. All have expressed support. Of course, the bills are all subject to appropriation. Therefore, the number of nurses that could receive assistance is contingent on the funding for each of the programs.

Attached is some information, including bill numbers, the committee to which each has been referred, and summaries of each bill. The full text of each bill is available upon request or may be accessed through the General Court's Website. I would welcome suggestions from the Task Force regarding any additional programs or changes to these proposals that might be proposed. Perhaps the Task Force could also help in determining how many positions for each program should be budgeted depending on the availability of funds. I would assume that we would start the programs on a limited basis and let them grow each year, as we have done with the teacher programs.

Sincerely,

RICHARD T. MOORE, *Senate Chair*
Committee on Health Care

cc: Members of the Health Care Task Force



PRESCRIPTION *for* HEALTH

Senator Richard T. Moore *or* Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care

Proposal for a Clara Barton Nursing Excellence Program

BILL NUMBER: SB 301

TITLE: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CLARA BARTON NURSING EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

BILL HISTORY: SENATE BILL 301 IS A NEWLY FILED BILL.

CHAPTER AND SECTION OF MGL AFFECTED BY SENATE BILL 301: Section 19D, of Chapter 15A

SPONSORS: Lead Sponsor: Senator Richard T. Moore (D-Uxbridge); Cosponsors: Senator(s): Tarr, Resor, Joyce, Chandler, Murray, Fargo; Representative(s) Simmons, Canavan, Brown, Goguen.

Bill referred to the Joint Committee on: Education, Arts, and the Humanities

Background:

Proposal for a Clara Barton Nursing Excellence Program

In an effort to address the critical shortage of college graduates entering the nursing profession, the Commonwealth should establish a program to provide financial incentives to graduates of BORN approved nursing programs, provided that the nurse agrees to work within the Commonwealth at a licensed health care facility including, but not limited to acute care hospitals, neighborhood and community health centers, nursing homes or as a visiting nurse, public health nurse or school nurse. Those selected for the program would receive a stipend in the amount of \$25,000 payable over at least five years with up to a \$5,000 bonus in the first year, \$6,000 in the second year, and \$7,000 per year thereafter until the \$25,000 is awarded to the recipient, provided that the nurse remains within the field of nursing, and in good standing with BORN. In addition, the nurse shall be eligible for assistance in repaying educational loans. The program would be named to honor the work of Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, and educator, nurse, and a native of Oxford, Massachusetts.

Summary:

Special provisions of the bill:

- ❑ **Student Loan Repayment:** (initially a recruitment mechanism, but also can be used as a mini-retention piece as many nurses leave the profession within 3 years of starting employment as a nurse. This program is subject to appropriation.

The student loan repayment provision is aimed at rewarding students who have excelled in their nursing studies and who are entering into the nursing workforce. Ideally, this award would be given to those students who are willing to work in challenging geographic locations (inner cities / community health centers) or nursing jobs

that traditionally pay a lower salary (school nurses/ public health nurses). The loan repayment equals \$150.00 per month for up to 4 years.

- ❑ **Signing Bonus:** (initially a recruitment mechanism, but also can be used as a mini-retention piece as many nurses leave the profession within 3 years of starting employment as a nurse. Payments to the recipient would last no more than 5 years.

This provision is aimed at attracting both in state and out-of-state nursing students to work in Massachusetts after graduation. \$25,000 would be paid out as a bonus directly to the nurse on a multi year disbursement schedule: at least \$5,000 the first year, \$6,000 the second year, and \$7,000 each year until they reach \$25,000.

- ❑ **Expert Nursing Corps:** (retention piece...award is given over 10 years)

This provision is aimed at mid-career nurses. The idea is to give mid-career nurses an incentive to further their professional education/certification and to become mentors for younger, less experienced nurses. This may encourage “good” nurses to stay in the profession by: 1) giving them \$50,000 over a ten year period, and 2) it relieves them from some direct care responsibilities and allows them to provide guidance, encouragement and support to other nurses in the hope that they will excel in the field of nursing.

- ❑ **Institutional Grants for Mentoring and Internships.** This provision would make available to healthcare institutions and institutions of higher education grants for the purpose of establishing and maintaining nurse mentoring and nurse internship programs. This provision, like others in this bill, would be subject to appropriation.
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PRESCRIPTION *for* HEALTH

Senator Richard T. Moore *or* Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care

Proposal for a Clara Barton Nursing Scholarship Program

BILL NUMBER: SB 302

TITLE: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE CLARA BARTON NURSING EXCELLENCE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

BILL HISTORY: SENATE BILL 302 IS A NEWLY FILED BILL.

CHAPTER AND SECTION OF MGL AFFECTED BY SENATE BILL 302: Section 16 of Chapter 15A.

SPONSORS: Lead Sponsor: Senator Richard T. Moore (D-Uxbridge); Cosponsors: Senator(s): Tarr, Joyce, Chandler, Murray, Magnani, Fargo; Representative(s) Simmons, Canavan, Donovan, Jehlen, Brown, Chiampa, Naughton, Goguen

Bill referred to the Joint Committee on: Education, Arts and the Humanities

Background:

Proposal for a Clara Barton Nursing Excellence Scholarship Program

In an effort to address the critical shortage of students entering the nursing profession, the Commonwealth should establish a program to provide scholarship incentives to students who wish to enter the study, and eventually practice in the profession of nursing within the Commonwealth at a licensed health care facility including, but not limited to acute care hospitals, psychiatric and mental health clinics or hospitals, neighborhood and community health centers, rehabilitation centers, nursing homes or as a visiting nurse, or as public health or school nurse. The program would be named to honor the work of Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross, and educator, nurse, and a native of Oxford, Massachusetts.

Summary:

This bill amends chapter 15A by adding a new section, section 16(1/2). Chapter 15A deals with public education. Section 16 references the Board of Higher Education and different types of scholarships/grants/financial aid awarded to students who attend schools of higher education in Massachusetts.

This bill amends section 16 of chapter 15A by adding section 16 (1/2) which names and establishes a Clara Barton Nurse scholarship program.

Provisions of the bill:

- ❑ The bill calls for a scholarship award not to exceed \$2,500 per academic semester for public colleges and universities and \$5,000 per semester for independent colleges and universities (Both public and private institutions must be chartered in the Commonwealth) as long as the student remains in good standing as a student in his/her institution.
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- ❑ Student would be chosen for the scholarship based on objective measures such as test scores, grade point average, class rank, leadership skills, clinical knowledge, and other such criteria determined by the council.
- ❑ The Council may target awards to students from geographic and nursing specialty areas in the Commonwealth that such nursing services are in need, as provided by the Department of Public Health and the Board of Registration in Nursing. The Council may also set forth an outreach plan to attract underrepresented populations to the nursing profession.

Ideally, the Commonwealth should be marketing the profession of nursing to students in of middle and high school age, but this scholarship program is available to any student, regardless of their status.



PRESCRIPTION *for* HEALTH

Senator Richard T. Moore *or* Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care

Proposal for a Direct Care Workers' Health Insurance Assistance Program

BILL NUMBER: SB 558

TITLE: AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE DIRECT CARE WORKERS INSURANCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

BILL HISTORY: SENATE BILL 558 IS A NEWLY FILED BILL.

CHAPTER AND SECTION OF MGL AFFECTED BY SENATE BILL 558: Section 9C of chapter 118E

SPONSORS: Lead Sponsor: Senator Richard T. Moore (D-Uxbridge); Cosponsors: Senator(s): Melconian, Resor, Tarr, Glodis, Tucker, Joyce, Chandler, Murray, Tisei, Magnani; Representative(s) Canavan, Donovan, Jehlen, Bunker, Pope, Hodgkins, Simmons, Naughton, Verga, Goguen, Festa, Carron, Kaprielian.

Bill referred to the Joint Committee on: Health Care

Background:

This bill is aimed at addressing the problem many lower-paid direct care providers have in affording their own health insurance and the difficulty of providers in recruiting and retaining these employees. In many cases, any wage “pass-throughs” or raises given to these direct care workers are offset by the increase in their insurance premiums.

Summary:

Provisions of the bill:

- ❑ An insurance subsidy benefit would be given to those direct care workers employed by non-profit health care providers who are younger than 65 years old and who earn less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (currently 300% of the FPL for a single person is \$25,050; \$33,750 for a family of two).
- ❑ The subsidy will be given to each employee to offset their contributions for health insurance. The employer could not decrease the percentage of the premium they were paying for each employee's health insurance after the enactment of the bill.
- ❑ If an employer did not offer health insurance prior to the enactment of this bill, then MassHealth would be directed to, notwithstanding and other income eligibility requirements, enroll the employee in MassHealth or another qualified medical insurance program. The Division of Medical Assistance

(DMA) would subsidize the premium of MassHealth or another qualified medical insurance program at a rate not less than 100% of the total cost of the premium.

- DMA would be required to market this program to direct care workers to employees of private health, human and social service providers that deliver direct health care services under contract with the departments within the executive office of health and human services and the executive office of elder affairs.

This program would be subject to appropriation, but we would call for up to \$10,000,000 to be expended, with not more than \$5,000,000 expended for the 1st year of the program.